often individually small, and widely scattered, so that apart from the Royal Forests there were few acres where large scale sawing machinery was either available or capable of being economically used. But at our meeting of 2nd March I was able to report to the War Cabinet a generous offer by Mr. Alfred de Rothschild of his two valuable forests in the Chilterns as a free gift to the country. This offer had been communicated to me by him in the following letter :—

Mr. de Rothschild's

" 1, Seamore Place,
Mayfair.
28th February,
1917.

My dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I feel that I am hardly justified in troubling you with these lines when you are so overwhelmed with work, but I feel also that you will forgive me when you have read the same.

I am, namely, most anxious to place at your entire disposal the woods which I possess on my Halton Estate, where, as you no doubt know, a very large camp has been in existence since the commencement of the War—the average about 15,000 soldiers and sometimes as many as 20,000.

I am, I must confess, not an expert as regards what sort of timber would be suitable for pit-props,[5] but I cannot help thinking that, as there are so many fine trees in my woods at Halton,[6]

some of them at least would be suitable for that purpose. Might I ask you very kindly to send down your own expert who would very easily be able to report fully on the subject, and I should